

## **PERSONAL HYGIENE AND THE FOOD HANDLER**

**PURPOSE:** To increase awareness of the effects good personal hygiene has on food safety.

**SCOPE:** This guide applies to management, supervisors, and all employees who come into contact with food.

**GENERAL:** Good personal hygiene is vital to food safety. Management and supervisors must train employees to follow proper procedures. Customers expect cleanliness of the operation, as well as the employees who are handling their food. The more aware the employees are of the importance of personal hygiene, the more likely they will follow the standards.

### **GUIDANCE:**

There are several factors involving personal hygiene that can influence the safety of the food you serve.

#### **A. Proper Hand Washing**

The FDA's 1993 Model Food Code recommends washing hands twice, using a nail brush as part of the first wash. Employees should also wash their hands and arms up to the elbow:

- When beginning a shift
- After eating or drinking
- After smoking
- After sneezing or coughing
- After handling raw foods
- After handling nonfood items
- After cleaning
- After touching money
- After using the restroom
- Touching anything that may contaminate their hands

1. There should be at least one sink designated for handwashing only. Check your handwashing sink to make sure it provides a nail brush, soap dispenser, hot and cold water, and a single use paper towel dispenser or hand dryer. Be sure employees are not using their aprons or wiping cloths to dry their hands.

2. Employees should rinse their hands using hot water. Work up a lather on hands and arms up to the elbow. Be sure to use a nailbrush to scrub, especially under the fingernails and between the fingers. Rinse thoroughly and use a clean paper towel or hot air to dry. Hand washing should last a minimum of 20 seconds.

#### B. Proper Hand Care

- Finger nails should be kept short and clean at all times
- No finger nail polish or acrylic nails
- All cuts/sores should be properly bandaged and gloves should be worn.

#### C. Use of Gloves

Employees should wash their hands before putting on gloves and when changing into a new pair of gloves. They should also change gloves if they become contaminated or torn. There is often a false sense of security when employees wear gloves. Employees should be trained to understand that wearing foodservice gloves does not ensure safe food. They only place a barrier between the hand and the item that is handled. Often people think because they are wearing gloves they are being sanitary. This is not true if they continue to touch their hair or cough onto their gloves. Employees need to be trained on the proper use of gloves.

Employees should:

- Use single-use gloves only once
- Wear gloves that are the right size
- Use gloves for their designated use
- Change gloves when they become contaminated

#### D. Personal Hygiene

- Employees should bathe daily
- Brush teeth regularly
- Wear clean clothes
- Wear hair restraints
- Never wear jewelry - except plain wedding band
- Stay at home if they have: fever, diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat, etc.

#### **SUMMARY:**

It is the responsibility of management to train employees on proper handwashing procedures. Post signs to remind employees of the “20 second” rule or any of your other personal hygiene standards. Include these items in your orientation training or your employee handbook. Personal hygiene is vital to food safety. Illness can be spread by almost every part of the human body.